

# The Savannah; Transatlantic Steamer

By Jeannette Holland Austin



The SavannahA French report on American steam vessels published in 1823 as well as Russian newspaper accounts contemporary with the steamship Savannah upon its historic voyage to St. in 1819, described a rigged scale model purported to be of the pioneer transatlantic steamer Savannah.

For many years this model was generally accepted as being a reasonably accurate representation and was the basis for countless illustrations but it does not agree with the published catalog description as to the side paddle wheels nor does it agree with the material in the Marestier report, which is accepted as the only source for a contemporary picture of the Savannah.

Consequently, the National Museum undertook the research necessary to correct or replace the existing model with the help of Frank O. Braynard of

the American Merchant Marine Institute, Eugene S. Ferguson, curator of mechanical and civil engineering at the Museum, and others. The Savannah crossed from Savannah, Georgia to Liverpool, England from May 22 to June 20, 1819; and proceeded to the Baltic, where she entered at St. Petersburg (now Leningrad), Stockholm, and a few other ports.

Upon her return she reached Savannah, Georgia on November 30, and then on December 3 she sailed for Washington, D.C., arriving on December 16. Her original logbook on exhibition in the Museum covers the period between March 28, 1819, when she first left New York for Savannah, to December 1819 when she was at Washington.

The United States National Museum's new model of the Savannah (pictured) was built by Arthur Henning, Inc., of New York City, from the ship's plans as reconstructed by staff members of the Museum's division of transportation. Source: *The Pioneer Steamship SAVANNAH: A Study for a Scale Model* by Howard I. Chapelle